

Response to untrue report by Apple Daily on Immigration Department's handling of applications for search of marriage records

The Immigration Department (ImmD) today (February 22) responded to the Apple Daily's untrue report on the ImmD's handling of applications for search of marriage records and expressed regrets over such report.

The ImmD said that the Office of the Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) is an independent monitoring institution and has been conducting independent, unbiased, impartial and professional investigation. Meanwhile, the ImmD stated that it has all along been facilitating the investigation by the Ombudsman in an open, transparent and responsible manner, without any intent to mislead or withhold any information. The ImmD attaches great importance to the recommendations made by the Ombudsman regardless of the complaints being substantiated or not, the department will proactively study practicable measures to implement the recommendations of the Ombudsman, with a view to constantly enhancing and raising the ImmD's service quality to strive for excellence and introduce necessary measures to suit the situation.

The ImmD emphasised that the department has all along been handling such applications fairly and impartially in accordance with the established procedures and the stipulations under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. While respecting press freedom, the ImmD also attaches great importance to protecting personal data privacy, hence its staff members have been upholding high professional and ethical standards to assess each of the application in a fair and impartial manner. With a view to tackle malicious doxxing, the ImmD has the responsibility to assess the reasons of applications made by data requestors or searchers whom are not the data subject so as to prevent abuse or illegal use of the personal data in such records.

Concerning Apple Daily disregarding of the Ombudsman's concluded investigation and unscrupulously made unfounded accusations against the ImmD to diminish its integrity and professionalism in the eyes of the public, the ImmD once again expressed deep regrets.